

Dear Colleagues,

I am very pleased to welcome you to Barcelona, on behalf of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, for the seminar, "Citizen Politics: Are the New Media Reshaping Political Engagement?"

The UAB was founded in 1968 within the framework of Franco's education policy reforms in Spain. The founders aimed to establish four principles of autonomy: freedom to select teaching staff, admission available to all students (albeit with limits on the number accepted), and the freedom to create its own study plans and independent control over the University's financial resources. In this way, funding the UAB by decree had two specific purposes: in the first place it had an experimental role in testing different elements of university autonomy which were to makeup the coming university reform, and in second place, it sought to offer an immediate solution to the deficit created by the increased demand for higher education across the country.

The foundation of the UAB and its institutional extension, especially in its first two years implied an opportunity for educational innovation and experimentation within the university at all levels. This challenged the Franquist regime in many ways as democratic failures and the elitism in the foundational project were eventually eclipsed by the persistent claims of the university community and the eventual end of the regime. In 1978 the University became under the jurisdiction of the Generalitat de Catalunya and its statutes were reformed. The Political Science and Sociology faculty was created in 1986. Currently, the UAB has over 29,100 undergraduate and 11,050 postgraduate students and 3,813 academic and research personnel.

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